

Chart: The Second Red Scare, 1939-1954

Event	Date	Significance
Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany disillusions many American communists	1939	Many intellectuals abandon the party and Stalinism after the Soviets and Germans agree to allow Poland's dismemberment.
House Committee on Un-American Activities is established to investigate "un-American propaganda"	1945	Hollywood is a particular target of the HUAC beginning with hearings in 1947. Studio executives and some actors assure the Committee of their loyalty and anti-communism, but the Hollywood Ten refuse to testify, citing the 1 st Amendment. All go to jail in 1950.
Walter Reuther wins presidency of United Auto Workers	1946	Reuther defeats a communist and other large unions also reject communist leadership. American labor has long been resistant to communist influences.
Truman signs Executive Order 9835	March 1947	Federal employee loyalty program authorizes the attorney general to prepare a list of "totalitarian, Fascism, Communist, or subversive" organizations. 1210 firings and 6000 resignations result.
Whittaker Chambers accuses U.S. diplomat Alger Hiss of spying for the Soviets	1948	Hiss is convicted of perjury though supporters claim he was framed. Congressman Richard Nixon gains a reputation as an anti-communist when he is given secret documents allegedly hidden in a pumpkin.

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Sen. Joseph McCarthy begins attacking the State Department	February 1950	Claiming he has the names of 205 Communists, McCarthy goes on to charge Gen. George Marshall, among others, as an agent of communism.
McCarran Committee encourages witnesses to identify left-leaning friends	1951	Diplomats, labor leaders, professors, and schoolteachers are investigated. Many refuse to testify on 5 th Amendment grounds, though many assume this is an admission of guilt.
Julius & Ethel Rosenberg are electrocuted	1953	Convicted on espionage charges, the Rosenbergs are believed to be part of the Fuchs spy ring which passed atomic secrets to the Soviets.
Senate censures McCarthy 67-22 for conduct “unbecoming a member of the Senate”	December 1954	The two-month Army-McCarthy hearings center on who promoted an Army dentist and end when lawyer Joseph Welch asks “Have you no sense of decency?” in response to McCarthy’s personal attack on another lawyer.